

HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

April 1999

HAPPENINGS

The April meeting of the Hancock County Historical Society will be held at noon on Thursday, April 22 at the Kate Lobrano House, Bay Saint Louis.

*Meg Hilliker will address the Society on the provocative subject, "You are richer than you think." She advises that you bring your pencil.

Call 467-4090 for luncheon reservations at \$6.00. Please call early to assure your reservation and to help us plan seating.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Gulf Coast Council of Garden Clubs, under the chairmanship of our own Petie Hyman, produced a great Pilgrimage this year. Bay Saint Louis was the host city. Opening day activities included a judged flower show held at the Main Street Methodist Church and six seminars held in the courtroom of the Hancock County Court House.

Seminar speakers were: Charles Gray, Fred Wagner, John Adams, Betty Lyons, Robert Leeton and Kim Kriner.

Tours of Bay Saint Louis and Waveland homes were conducted on March 23, sponsored by "Gather Ye Rosebuds" rose society and on March 25 sponsored by the Bay Waveland Garden Club.

I understand that this is the largest free pilgrimage in the nation and we are honored to participate in it. Thank you, club members, for providing this great cultural event.

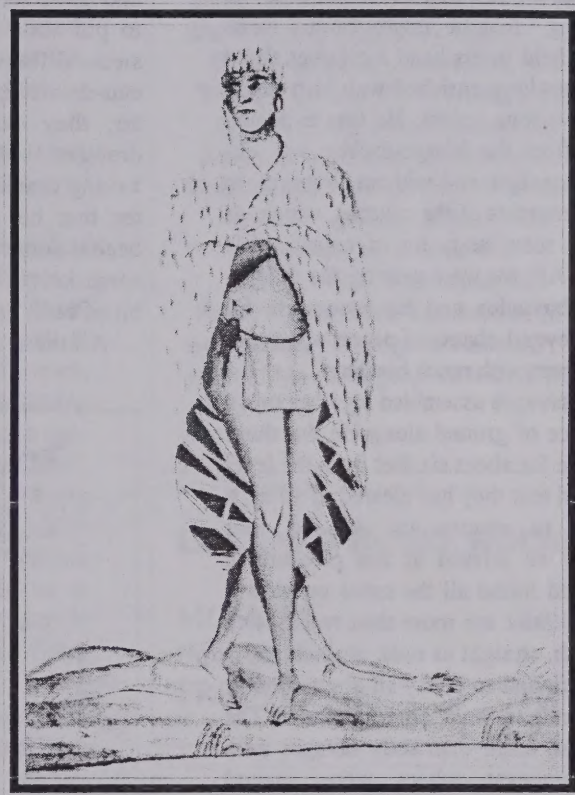
The Mississippi Heritage Trust held its 1999 conference in Biloxi with a series of meetings and dinners. It was our
(Continued on page 3)

18th
Century
Indian
in Winter
attire

Sketch by
A. De Batz

National
Anthropological
Archives

Smithsonian
Institution,
Washington,
D.C.



The Voyage of *Le Marin* Part four of a 1999 series

Le Marin, the ship of Pierre LeMoyne Sieur d'Iberville, led five vessels under the French flag to our shores in 1699. Jean Baptiste Le Moyne Sieur d'Bienville, d'Iberville's brother, sailed with him, in command of *La Badine*. The goal was French control of the Mississippi River and establishment of colonies in the region.

After landing at the site of today's Biloxi and Ocean Springs, the squadron sailed west along the coast to find the Mississippi River.

In the March *Historian*, *Le Marin's*

chronicler described the search for navigable deep channels and encounters with friendly Indians along the Mississippi. With this issue, we continue to follow in their wakes as they ply their way in longboats and canoes, having left the large vessels at Ship Island to await their return.

We resume the narrative with selections from *Le Marin's* log for March.
Edith Back

On Saturday the 14th, toward half past six o'clock we embarked to try to reach the village, which we knew could not be very far away from what the savages we had seen Friday had told us. We rowed with all our might

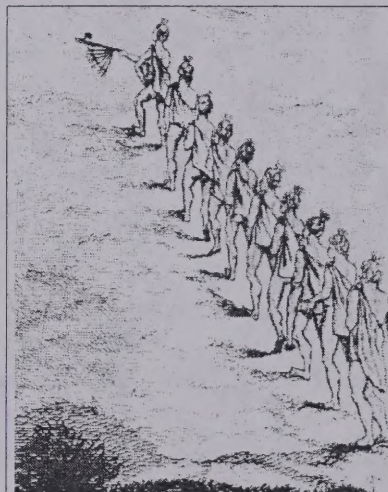
to get there all the sooner. The river wound around making several turns, which we rounded trying to find our way about. Towards two o'clock in the afternoon we sighted a canoe in which were four savages, to wit, two men and two children, together with a man aged from twenty-five to thirty, and an old fellow whose scalp they had lifted, he being a prisoner of war. The head man had a bear skin wrapped around his body, his face was all smeared over with mud, he believing that he improved his looks and he held in his hand a calumet about three feet long enriched with bird feathers of various colors. He was a deputy chief from the Margoulaches; we engaged together and without stopping, in the ceremonies of the calumet, which, as will be seen later, are of considerable length. As we were nearing the village, the ambassador and his associates intoned several chants of peace, accompanying them with much howling.

The savages assembled together on an eminence of ground alongside the shore that rose for about six feet from the level land and that they had cleared of all cane growth to receive us. Around four o'clock we arrived at this pleasurable spot and found all the canes cut down; and the latter are more than twenty-five feet high, straight as rods, an inch and a half thick and so bushy all around that it is difficult to walk amongst them. The chief had more than sixty savages with him, amongst whom were several women, the presence of the latter was a great mark of friendship towards us.

Monsieur d'Iberville was greeted by the savages in their usual way: they began by raising their hands towards the sun, as if in admiration, then they softly rubbed their hands on their bellies, the latter gesture being considered a very great mark of affection amongst them. They followed the same ritual with Monsieur de Sauvolle, Monsieur de Benville, Father Anasthasius, and the rest of our men. We in turn greeted them likewise. They had us sit down on some bedded cones, over which they had spread a bear skin; they presented us the calumet of peace, which we accepted. Their chief sat in the midst of us and the other savages did likewise with our men, each and every one of them, offering them all a smoke. They later brought us

a quantity of Indian wheat prepared in various ways – some in forms of loafs, both round and of some length, which they had baked under beds, after the women had ground the millet, some had been soaked in bear fat, some had been prepared like sagamite, with the insertion of numbers of soft beans in the dough and some were of just plain baked flour. We ate a little from each kind and gave the remainder to the men to put aboard our chaloupes. Monsieur d'Iberville gave them some eau-de-vie [brandy] diluted with water, they each took only a small draught, finding it too strong, never having drank that sort of liquor. After that he gave them some glass beads, some needles, some mirrors, some knives and other gimcracks; a bit of each to all of them.

All these ceremonies, as well as



Dancing the Calumet

this magnificent feast, lasted until half past six in the evening; then the Chief had all the youngsters sing for us. Each held in hand a small gourd, in which had been inserted some small seeds, and they shook them in accompaniment with their voices. At the end of each song, none of these being very long and consisting of almost the same words repeated over and over again, although the tunes were different, they engaged in the most terrific howlings, these echoing in the woods for more than a league around. Those sweet

harmonies lasted for more than two hours, the Chief absenting himself at intervals; finally he was ready to bid us adieu in his own fashion. We made him understand that we would visit them all, the next day at their village; they lighted some torches, made up of bundles of dry cane stock, and struck them in the ground in the middle of the assemblage, giving a good light all around. Then four of them stood up, and began dancing, singing and howling in turns, raising their outstretched arms, and all the time fiercely pounding the ground with their feet, this lasted an hour.

Most of them left a short time after that, only four or five staying with us. Monsieur d'Iberville asked them if the fork in the river was still very far away; they gave us to understand that there was none. We believed that they were telling us this so as to have us settle down amongst them. We knew that what they told us impossible, as we had come too far up the river and had seen it follow too serpentine a course for it to be otherwise, so much so that in a six league headway we traveled almost over every point in the compass. We traced the river's course for them, with pencil and paper which they seemed to understand very well. Then we handed them the pencil asking them to mark the position of the fork, or at least where they thought it was, showing them the while the position of our ships, they calling the latter Pinanis, which in their language means canoes; they kept on arguing with us as to the contrary, and asserted that there was no fork.

Finally, tired of our insistence, they gave us to understand that there was one toward which they had once ascended, but that there was no depth of water there, and that they had had to portage their canoes several times. Then, toward eleven o'clock, they built a fire close to our tents, because of the cold and of our having practically nothing to use for cover, and we all retired until morning....

On Monday the 16th, between five and six o'clock, we planted our

cross. All the savages in the village, together with their chief, came down to see us aboard and eight of them came along with us in one of their canoes. The chief of the Bayagoulas embarked with Monsieur d'Iberville, to take us all to the village of the Houmas. The river winds around a great deal and has a strong current, the latter becomes swifter when the wind blows in its same direction. Having left around nine o'clock, we had journeyed for about five leagues by half past five in the afternoon. We landed and put up our shelters about a league above an arm, which they had told us at the village was a fork. It is nothing but a lake, through which we could travel to within four or five leagues of our ships, using their small canoes and making several portages....

On Tuesday the 17th, around seven in the morning, we embarked again, the river winds around the same turn as on the day preceding, but the current is not so swift. Three leagues from the place where we had spent the night we left behind our two canoes of bark, also the one the savages had with them, together with some men to go hunting, because we had but little meat left, and we were saving that for when we were put to sea after our having rejoined our ships.

From A Chapter from *Memoirs & Documents* by Pierre Margry. Translated by Henry de ville du Sinclair.

DONATIONS RECEIVED

Dorothea Martin donated a 5 x 9 foot American flag which has been hung on our stage, suitable for saluting. At a recent DAR meeting at Lobrano, our best effort was a 3 X 5 inch flag. We now have a great deal more pride, thanks to Dorothea.

Gail Alexander Buzhardt provided us with a copy of her marvelous book, *Recontres sur le Mississippi, 1682 - 1763*. It is a compilation of documents written by French colonists, explorers, administrators, priests and soldiers who lived in the Lower Mississippi River Region. The book is written in French with English annotations.

(President from page 1)

pleasure to host the state-wide group for dinner at Lobrano House Friday night.

I went to Biloxi and earlier in the day as a guide and lecturer and accompanied the bus to the Depot where they were served the first course of a progressive dinner. The next course was served at the Shoo-Fly next to Old City Hall.

Next, at Lobrano House, they were served the entrée, jambalaya, prepared by Mayor Edward Favre – and a great jambalaya it was.

Dessert and coffee were then served at Heritage House bed and breakfast on Ulman Street.

It was a great event and excellent exposure to an expanded audience.

Placide Nicaise, whose book, *"Children of the Lilly"* is a work of fiction, based upon historical events, primarily in the lives of his ancestors. He has now completed a second book, *"Requiem for the Lilly"*. Mr. Nicaise will be in Ocean Springs on May 8 and 10:30 a.m. to autograph copies at Favorite's Book Store. At 1:00 p.m. he will be at Marshall's Book Store in Gulfport and and 3:30 at Bookends Book Store in Bay Saint Louis.

Those with Nicaise/Necaise ancestors will be especially interested but interest is not limited to relatives. "A novel about the turbulent history and the forgotten people of the Gulf Coast. The song of death for the French Colonial Empire turns into a story of survival for those who slip away into the wilderness to start a new life".

Another great project of the Society is the restoration of missing or damaged tombstones in Cedar Rest Cemetery. Meg Hilliker has been working for several years on indexing the cemetery. She has done an incredible job, but still there remain unidentified graves, unreadable headstones or graves with no markers at all.

If you have any information pertinent to this index, please contact the Historical Society at 467-4090.

Charles Gray

NEW MEMBERS

Charlotte Foster, Houston, TX
Dr. Jimmy Thriffiley, Biloxi, MS
Richard Weber, Diamondhead, MS
Mrs. Richard Weber, Diamondhead, MS
Charles Dickinson, Bay Saint Louis, MS
Pat Dickinson, Bay Saint Louis, MS
Betty Cutler, Diamondhead, MS
Jesse Fineran, Bay Saint Louis, MS
Dorothy Reynaud, New Orleans, LA
Deborah Conery, Waveland, MS
William Conery III, Waveland, MS
Loretta Clark, New Orleans, LA
Lloyd Lewis, Stone Mountain, GA
Velma Rankin Holdsworth, Waveland
James E. Ladner, Athens, AL
Joy Koniak, Biloxi, MS
Jean Crowder, Waveland, MS
Peggy Strong Reid, Lumberton, MS
Beth Smith, Hastings on Hudson, NY
Henry "Mac" Magee, Waveland, MS

LOBRANO HOUSE HOURS

MONDAY	8 a.m.
through	to
FRIDAY	4 p.m.

THE

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

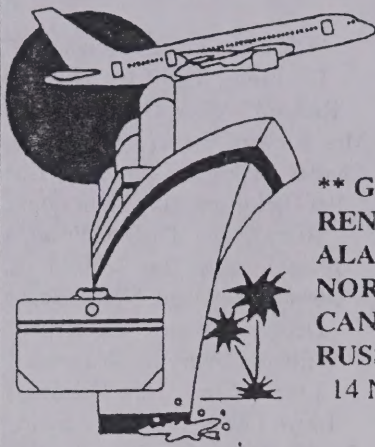
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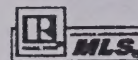
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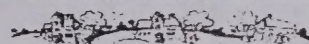
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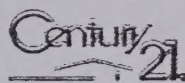
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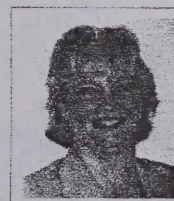
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


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